


Japan 2000-187963 is discussed in the specification commencing at page 2 and might be deemed pertinent for the reasons given therein. An English-language abstract for this document is enclosed. In this regard, U.S. Patent No. 6,266,483 is believed to be the English-language equivalent of Japan 2000-187963.

Inasmuch as this application has not yet received a first Office Action on the merits, it is believed that this Information Disclosure Statement is timely. See 37 C.F.R. § 1.97(b)(3).

Accordingly, the Examiner is urged to study this information in its entirety and to form an independent determination of the materiality of the information to the claimed invention. Additionally, the Examiner is requested to indicate that this information has been considered by initialing the appropriate portion of Form PTO-1449.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our Costa Mesa, California office by telephone at (714) 540-8700. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our address given below.

Respectfully submitted,


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